

Student Profile: Carmen, 4th grade student with dyslexia

The Classroom Environment

Visitors to Mrs. Jenkins' 4th grade classroom are surprised by its homey appearance. There are carpets and area rugs on the floor, bookcases and baskets full of books, a sofa with pillows, and plants at the end of each team table. Community baskets of supplies as well as individual folders for reading, writing, and math are stored in organizers by the meeting area. In addition to the classroom library, each child has individual bags of books kept in their chair pockets. Anchor charts, student work samples and student data sprinkle the walls. Though the environment can be easily mistaken as informal, it doesn't indicate a casual attitude toward either teaching. The classroom is well organized. The learning goal, essential questions and learning scale are posted when you enter the classroom beside the daily schedule though during the past several walk-throughs it was difficult to connect the student work to the standards. The vast majority of Mrs. Jenkins' instruction is conducted whole group. Students are most often asked to demonstrate their learning through written response.

The Student

Carmen is a 10-year-old student in Mrs. Jenkins' class who has a diagnosis of dyslexia. She has trouble with visual scanning (difficulty recognizing information she's looking for), visual processing (input and output of information), and working memory (difficulty performing multiple tasks at once). Carmen can read and comprehend but does so at a much slower rate than her peers and often requires multiple oral and visual exposures to the content. It is difficult for her to concentrate on or focus on tracking words or make the necessary conversions from visual input to a sound or word output. She also has difficulties with spelling and sequencing for problem solving.

Carmen struggles with "keeping up" and often gets "lost" in the modeled lesson portion of reading lessons, particularly for content or topics with which she is unfamiliar. She also struggles during independent reading time because of her difficulties with spelling and visual scanning, processing, and working memory. Carmen often looks to her peers to see what she is supposed to be doing. She has strong verbal skills. Her favorite class in school is Art. She is a very creative student and learns well with color and when her hands are occupied. Carmen receives accommodations of audio books during independent reading time and she is allowed to use an electronic spell checker for her writing.

Instructional Focus

The lessons have been focused on a combination of standards: character, setting, and plot (RL.1.3); connections and text structure (RI.1.3); main idea and details (RI.1.2); vocabulary (RI.2.4); and foundational skills (RF.4.4). The anchor standard of analyzing how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text is being approached at a cognitive complexity level of 2, for basic application of skills and concepts. Carmen's IEP goal for the standard is to draw on specific details in a text to make an in depth description of a character, setting, or event in a story or drama with 75% accuracy by the end of the second quarter.